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DRAFT REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME MATTERS ON ITS IN-SESSIONAL MEETING HELD DURING THE THIRTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL, 4-29 MAY 1992

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Addendum

CHAPTER V. COUNTRY AND INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

C. Asia and the Pacific (continued)

Fifth intercountry programme for Asia and the Pacific

1. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP), presented the fifth intercountry programme for Asia and the Pacific, which has a net indicative planning figure (IPF) of $160.9 million, and estimated contributions of $5 million from cost-sharing and $2 million from Special Programme Resources (SPR).

2. Three major themes are envisaged for UNDP cooperation: (a) human development through poverty alleviation; (b) economic management and reform; and (c) environmental and natural resource management. Within these themes, 16 programme areas provide the framework for individual regional and subregional programmes.

3. Eleven delegations endorsed the intercountry programme and made a number of observations. While commending the detailed process of consultations with regional organizations, governments and specialized agencies, two delegations were critical of the formulation process, particularly with respect to the lack of adequate debate at the meeting of aid coordinators in January 1992.

4. Many delegations commented favourably on the overall substantive thrust of the programme and on the consistency of its orientations with the Governing Council priority areas of focus for capacity-building. They noted with regret its sharp reduction in resources from a $228 million IPF in the fourth cycle, to $160 million for the fifth cycle. One delegation recommended that resources should be considerably increased through greater attention to resource mobilization.

5. Some delegations also commented favourably on certain features relating to implementation and management arrangements, for instance, collaboration with the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), greater involvement of UNDP field offices and regional, government and non-governmental agencies in formulating, implementing and monitoring regional programmes, expanded use of region-based resources, and stronger linkages with country programmes and SPR. They urged that particular attention be given to those aspects. One delegation also endorsed the greater use of United Nations Volunteer (UNV) specialists and Domestic Development Services field workers.

6. The Standing Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the fifth intercountry programme for Asia and the Pacific.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

7. The Assistant Administrator and Director, RBAP, presented the fifth country programme for the Lao People's Democratic Republic, which has a net IPF of $36.5 million, cost-sharing of $4.9 million, and complementary assistance from the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) of $12.2 million and $1.2 million from Special Programme Resources (SPR). These resources will be focused on: (a) support to the new economic mechanism; (b) development of the physical infrastructure; and (c) human resource development.

8. Two delegations spoke in support of the country programme. Its basic thrust was supported as well as some of its features, for example, relating to the use of United Nations Volunteers, grass-roots development, women in development, the environment, and the increasing emphasis on national execution. The inclusion of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) as integral parts of the programme and the reduction of the number of projects were also commended.

9. However, observations were made that coordination needs to be strengthened among the organizations of the United Nations system in the country and that considerable training would be required, particularly for national execution.

10. The Assistant Administrator thanked delegates for their support for the programme, which he considered to be good, and agreed to convey delegates' views to the Resident Representative for follow-up as appropriate.

11. The Standing Committee recommended that the Governing Counil approve the fifth country programme for the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Islamic Republic of Iran

12. The Associate Assistant Administrator presented the Administrator's request to the Governing Council (DP/CP/IRA/4/EXTENSION I) for the extension of the fourth country programme for the Islamic Republic of Iran, for the period 1992-1993, with IPF resources of $3.8 million.

13. The extension would enable a continuation of activities in each of the three areas covered by the country programme: (a) economic growth and reconstruction; (b) education, science and technology; and (c) reform of public administration.

14. The Standing Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the extension of the fourth country programme for a period of two years.

Afghanistan

15. The Assistant Administrator and Director, RBAP, presented the Administrator's request (DP/1992/64) for authorization by the Governing Council to continue to appraise and approve projects in the fifth cycle on a project-by-project basis.

16. This proposal was made in view of the continuing strife in Afghanistan and the difficulties in formulating a country programme. It was understood, however, that when conditions permitted, the preparation of the third country programme would be initiated.

17. The Standing Committee recommended that the Governing Council authorize the Administrator to approve projects on a case-by-case basis for Afghanistan.

Bhutan

18. The Assistant Administrator and Director, RBAP, introduced the fifth country programme for Bhutan, which will have an IPF of $24.5 million, with estimated cost-sharing of $1 million and expected or tentative resources from UNDP-administered funds of $16.0 million from UNCDF, $0.2 million from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and $1 million from SPR.

19. These resources will be concentrated in: (a) development of human resources; (b) efficiency in government and development of the private sector; (c) sustainability in natural resources management; and (d) regionally balanced development.

20. In addition to the representative of the Government of Bhutan, six delegations spoke in favour of the country programme, of which two had participated in the Committee's recent field visit there. Most of the delegations commented favourably on the focus of the programme and the strategy adopted and on its close conformity with the priorities of the Government's seventh five-year plan. Effective coordination within the United Nations system, particularly with Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) agencies, and with other donors, and the successful round-table meeting held in March 1992 were also commended. Some delegations also supported the idea of the Bhutan Environment and Conservation Trust Fund.

21. The delegations also noted the encouraging achievements made by the Government in many areas of the economuy during the last plan, particularly those relating to human resources development, for which UNDP support had been significant. However, one delegation wondered why the concept of human development had not been more explicitly used in the text, while another asked in similar terms about women in development.

22. Other delegations noted the use of a wide range of implementation modalities, including UNV. The increased momentum which will be given to national execution, with the proviso that flexibility in numerical targets should be maintained, was also endorsed.

23. In his response, the Government representative thanked the Committee for its support and reassured them that even if not mentioned under each area of concentration, women played an important role in Bhutan and that there was a particular need to increase women's participation in the development process.

24. The Standing Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the fifth country programme for Bhutan.

Nepal

25. The Resident Representative presented the fith country programme for Nepal, which will have a net IPF of $72.9 million and $0.3 million in cost-sharing. In addition, complementary assistance from UNDP-administered funds is also expected: $13.2 million from UNCDF, $585,000 from SPR, $354,000 from the Special Measures Fund for the Least Developed Countries (SMF/LDC) and $88,000 from UNIFEM.

26. The above resources will be concentrated in two main areas: (a) human development and poverty alleviation, through development policy and management; strengthening of the productive sectors for income and employment generation; and access to basic services for the poor; and (b) environmental conservation, through natural resources protection and management; and urban development and industrial pollution control.

27. In addition to the representative of the Government of Nepal, nine delegations spoke in support of the programme. They noted its focus on two main areas. They also noted the use of many modalities which should improve the impact of the programme; for instance, the use of United Nations volunteers, and thematic orientations relating to women in development, grass-roots participation, etc., and coordination with donors at various levels.

28. However, several delegations remarked that despite the improved focus, activities were still envisaged in too wide a number of areas, thus giving the impression of excessive dispersion. Furthermore, one delegation noted that some of the lessons drawn from the mid-term review, at which this issue was discussed, should have been reflected in the country programme document.

29. One delegation commented that because of the existence of larger donors in certain areas (for instance the Asian Development Bank (AsDB) in the areas of small and medium-scale enterprises, private-sector development and energy), where UNDP had up to then performed a gap-filling role, UNDP should no longer be involved.

30. Other delegations mentioned the need for effective coordination of activities, in addition to the normal sharing of information among donors. That should also include assistance to strengthen government capacity in the area. The country programme did identify the various donors involved in each sector, and for which sectoral level coordination would be required.

31. Another delegation mentioned the need to strengthen capacity in the area of policy analysis and development administration and management.

32. In response, the Resident Representative took note of the comments made and promised to take them into consideration during subsequent programme and project implementation. He also provided delegates with more details on how it was envisaged that proposed activities would contribute to the two major areas of focus with their corresponding programmes.

33. The Standing Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the fifth country programme for Nepal.